

STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
TRANSBOUNDARY NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA



highlights and findings

Biodiversity Support Program

TRANSBOUNDARY NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



TBNRM is “any process of cooperation across boundaries that facilitates or improves the management of natural resources (to the benefit of parties in the area concerned).”

International borders are political and not ecological boundaries. Key ecological systems and components occurring in two or more nations are subject to a range of often opposing management and land-use practices.

Unsustainable resource use on one side of a border may adversely affect resource use in neighbouring states.

To ensure that future generations can use today’s natural resources, the management of water catchments, ecosystems, and migratory wildlife must become more multinational and participatory across local, national, and international levels.

THE TBNRM STUDY

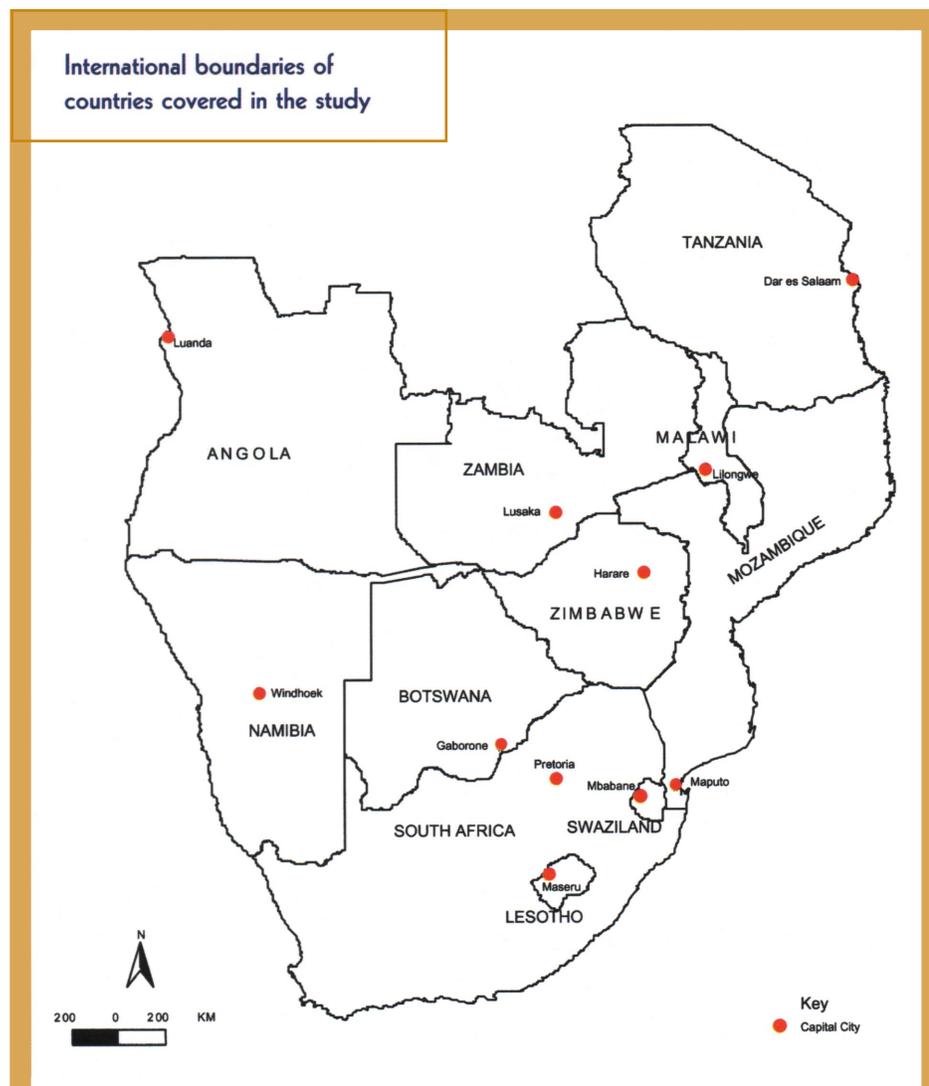
The concept of international peace parks and transboundary conservation areas (TBCAs), developed to manage shared natural resources better, was first introduced in the 1920s and 1930s.

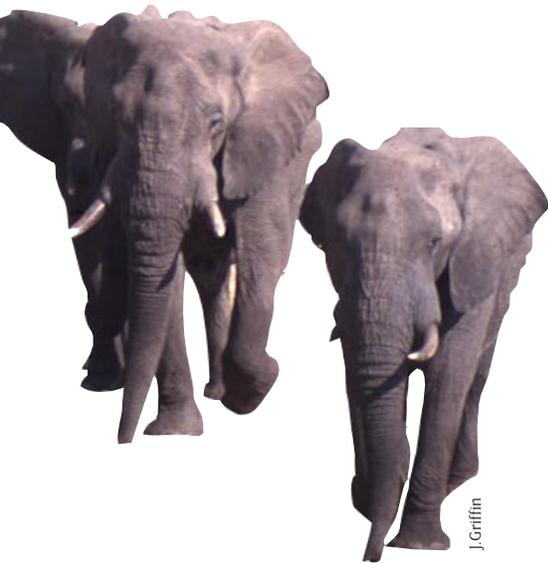
By 1997, 136 existing and 85 potential TBCAs straddled 112 international borders in 98 countries.

In southern Africa, several TBCA initiatives have developed informally over the last 50 years. Until recently, communication

among these initiatives was informal and ad hoc, and there was little dissemination of lessons learned. Over the past few years, however, dialogue among these projects has increased greatly. In 1997, the Peace Parks Foundation was established, and an international meeting on Peace Parks was held in Somerset West, South Africa. The Southern Africa Sustainable Use Specialist Group established a working group on Transfrontier Conservation Areas shortly afterwards.

Recognizing the growing momentum of transboundary natural resource management (TBNRM) developments in southern Africa, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funded the Biodiversity Support Program (BSP) to conduct a study of transboundary activities in the region. Primary objectives of the study were to outline the current status of TBNRM and to identify opportunities and constraints for future development.





KEY FINDING: significant ecological returns

Where international boundaries have divided ecosystems, river basins, and wildlife migratory routes, promotion of TBNRM can re-establish key ecological functions previously disrupted by the artificial limitations of political borders and enable an increase in the size of land under ecologically sustainable management.

The development of TBNRM areas as a profitable and sustainable land use is

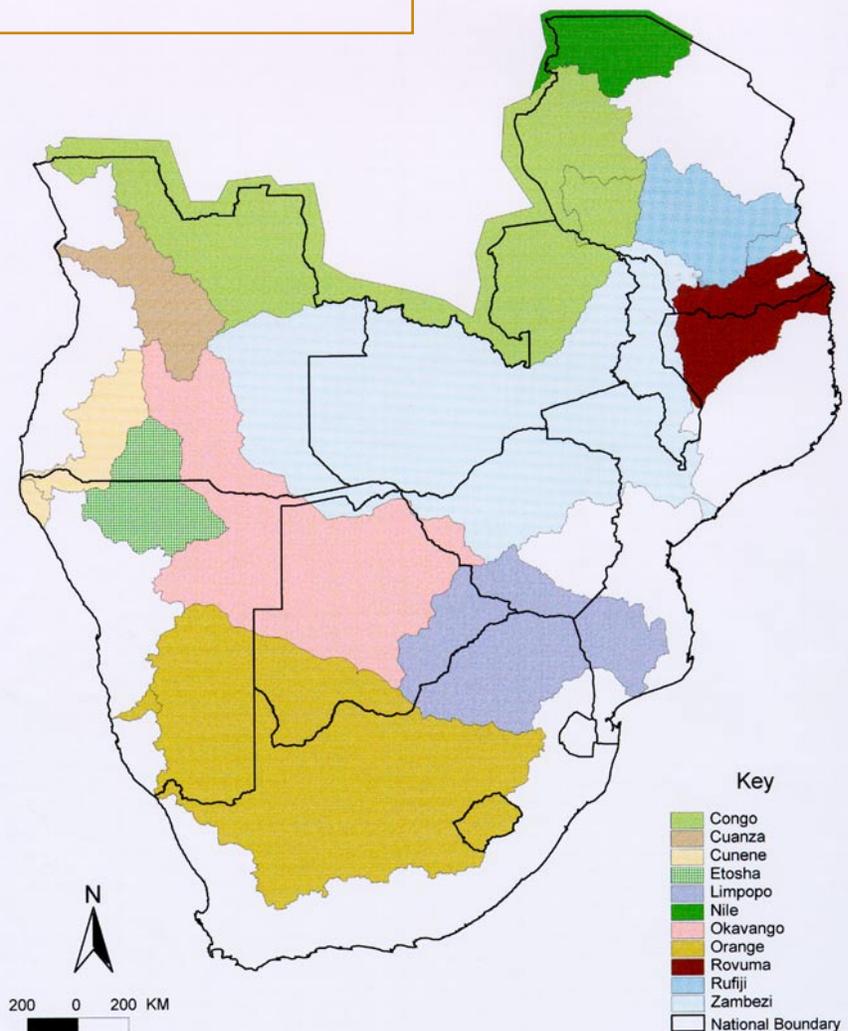
clearly supported by existing conditions. Southern Africa is largely an arid and semi-arid region, with less than five percent of the land suitable for sustained cultivation. While livestock can be supported on much of the land, both staple food and livestock production are failing to keep pace with population growth. Large tracts of marginal land, poorly suited to commercial crop or livestock production, are well suited to wildlife and other natural resource management programs. Of these areas, a high proportion lies near or adjacent to international boundaries (further evidence that TBNRM areas make sound ecological sense).

TBNRM Highlights

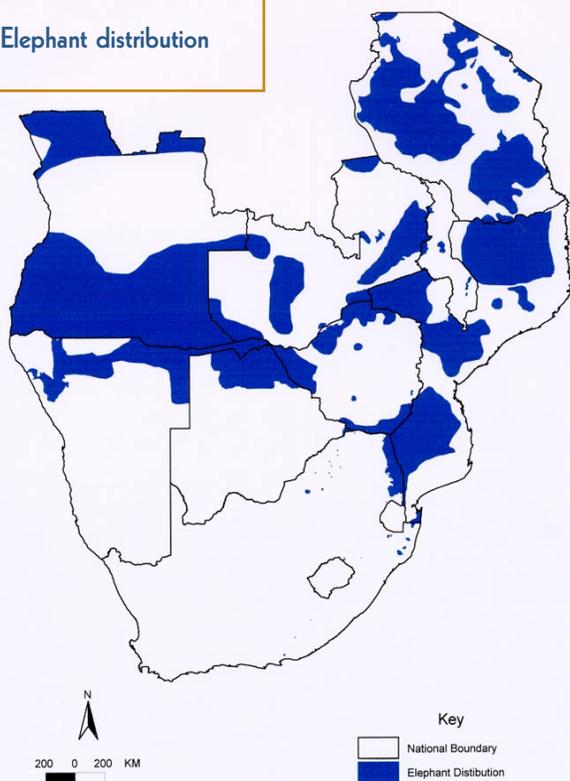
KGALAGADI TRANSFRONTIER PARK

Informal collaboration has existed since 1948 between Gemsbok National Park in Botswana and Kalahari Gemsbok National Park in South Africa, with the two areas functioning as one ecological unit without fencing and with free movement of wildlife. This cooperative effort culminated in 1999 with the formal declaration of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, in which the collaborating government agencies are officially authorised to make joint management decisions on behalf of their respective governments. The area is now recognised as a TBCA—an undivided ecosystem in which management will be coordinated, certain revenues will be shared, and visitors will have increased freedom of movement.

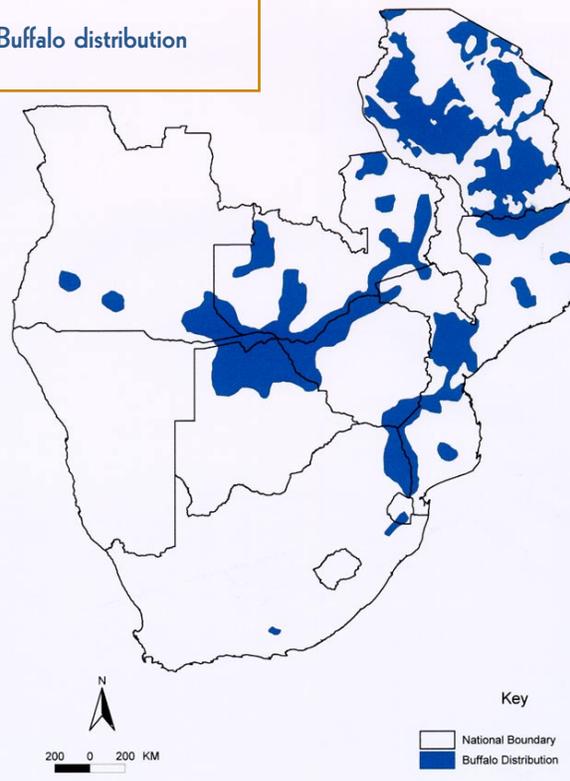
Major water basins in southern Africa



Elephant distribution



Buffalo distribution



TBNRM Highlights

SADC SUPPORT FOR TBNRM

Promoting an enabling environment

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is committed to integration and to a new regional community with sustainable development, based on the collective self-reliance and interdependence of its Member States. This commitment includes recognising that many of the region's cultural and environmental assets transcend national boundaries. The commitment to integration is stated in the 1992 SADC Treaty, which encourages the development of economic, social, and cultural ties across the region. A recently ratified SADC Wildlife Sector Protocol promotes the conservation and management of shared wildlife resources through the establishment of transfrontier conservation areas.

The process of achieving greater ecological stability through transboundary conservation activities is also influenced by non-ecological factors, including a desire to improve regional political cooperation and stability, economic advantage, and cultural harmony. This transboundary study examined current initiatives in southern Africa, evaluating benefits and constraints to these efforts within the existing political, economic, and social context. Findings and recommendations are highlighted below.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT: benefits and constraints

- ▶ TBNRM development can strongly promote regional cooperation; such cooperation is highly valued by southern African countries as evidenced, for example, by the ratification of the SADC Treaty.
- ▶ To date, the majority of TBNRM projects have developed locally between communities, between communities and protected area managers, and between the managers themselves. These projects tend to be most successful where national governments have devolved some aspect of control over land and resource use to local groups.
- ▶ Differences in capacity, commitment, and national policy across borders are strong constraints to development of transboundary agreements.
- ▶ Questions of national sovereignty and security, as well as high transaction costs, may inhibit forward momentum in forming multinational policies and agreements.

Veterinary fences

Policies on veterinary control measures act as a disincentive for TBNRM activities.



TBNRM Principles

Stakeholders identified three principles that can provide the framework for operations in TBNRM:

DEMOCRACY—TBNRM initiatives should be for the “people”—the users, managers, and beneficiaries of the resources.

To this end, stakeholder involvement should occur at all stages of the process, particularly during decision-making.

SUSTAINABILITY—In addition to sustainable natural resource use, sustainable financing, human resources and institutions are necessary.

EFFICIENCY—The benefits of TBNRM must outweigh the total costs of this lengthy and complex process. Efficiency is increased by building on existing resource management systems and institutions.

THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT: benefits and constraints

- Within southern African countries, the tourism potential is very high in a transboundary context and, compared to global tourism growth rates, relatively underexploited.
- The private sector, NGOs, and governments have long-term interests in tourism. Appropriately managed, nature-based tourism can be compatible with conservation and can generate funds needed to manage protected areas, as well as provide income and opportunities to local communities.
- TBNRM-fostered growth of the private sector is considered “politically correct,” both in terms of benefiting the environment and promoting the “global village.” The private sector can capitalize on this good will to draw international investment and support.
- Transborder cooperation leads to greater possibilities for the free movement of people, goods, services, and money.
- Regionwide investment, including investment in TBNRM activities, may be difficult to obtain due to instances of political instability, high rates of inflation, and heavily subsidized (and often unsustainable) agriculture.
- Economic constraints include restrictive national financial policies, barriers to free trade, and restrictive government veterinary policies.



J. Ogilthorpe



J. Griffin

Synergism: The Key to Success

There is no sense in pursuing TBNRM unless there is a belief among stakeholders that the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts. Otherwise, the additional transaction costs of "going transboundary" will compel stakeholders to remain isolated and manage individual initiatives within their own boundaries.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT: benefits and constraints

- ▶ Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) is currently being actively promoted in the region, often in border areas. This is an appropriate foundation for TBNRM development.
- ▶ Increasing the scope of CBNRM across borders facilitates formal contact (and, in turn, cooperation) between otherwise estranged communities.
- ▶ Specifically, TBNRM activities can result in the legalization of cross-border movement, renewing cultural ties and traditions that have been severed or restricted by international borders, strengthening marginalized groups, and increasing social and political stability.
- ▶ Barriers to successful development of activities include weak existing devolution of tenure and user rights to communities, and confusion and conflict between governance and tenure.
- ▶ There is a risk that community benefits will be usurped by other entities, such as private industry or NGOs, or will be eclipsed by national interests and ecological emphasis.

TBNRM Highlights

DRAKENSBERG/MALOTI MOUNTAINS

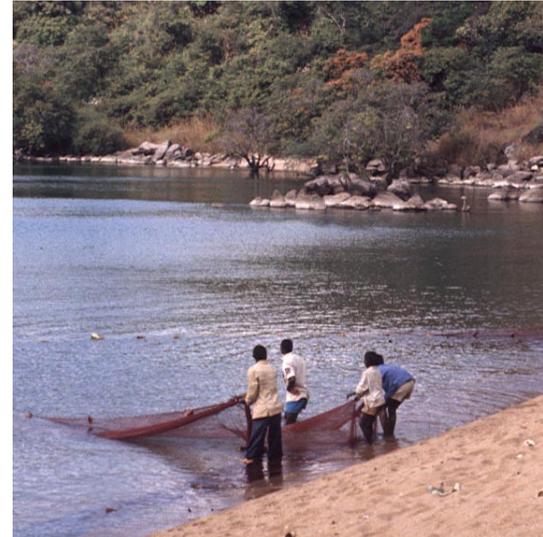
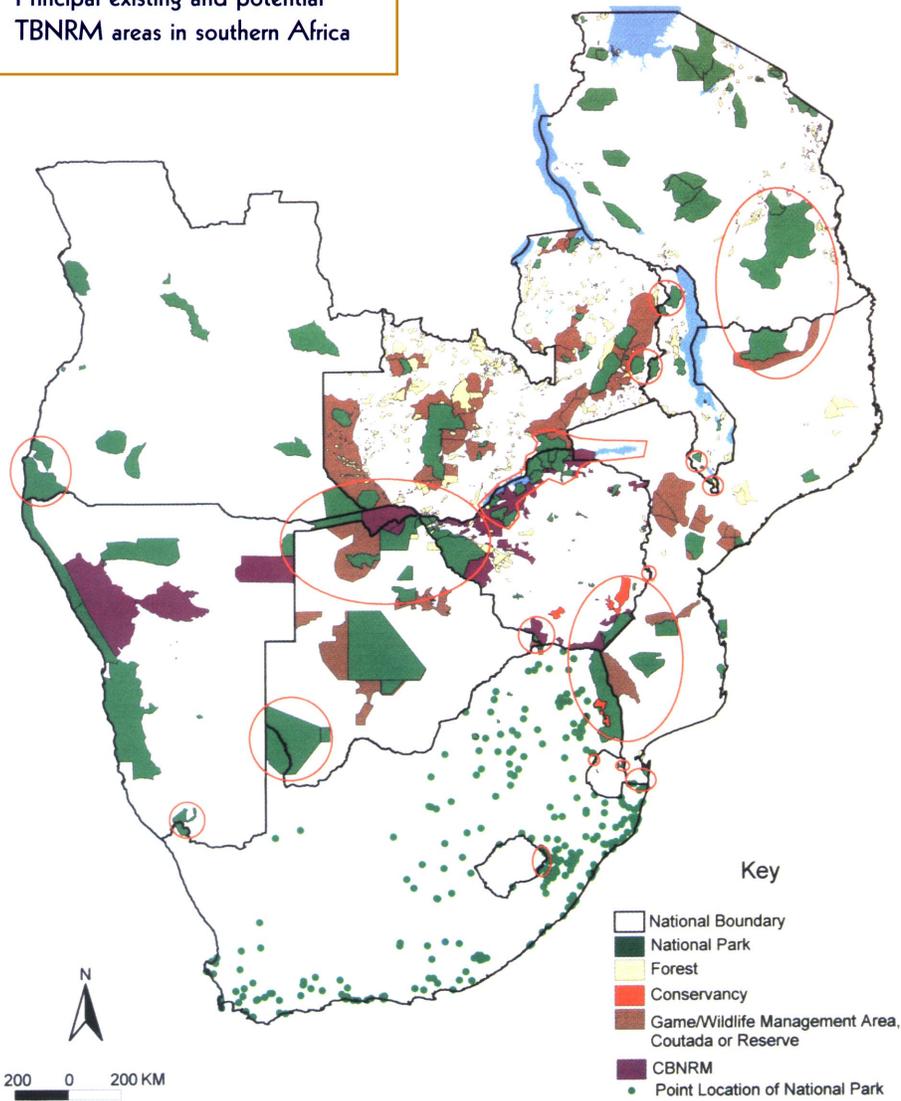
Enhancing dialogue in the process of developing formal bilateral agreements

Since the establishment of an intergovernmental liaison committee in 1982, there has been cooperation between authorities in Lesotho (Maloti Mountains) and South Africa (uKhahlamba-Drakensberg) regarding this shared mountain range system, which has regional significance as a water catchment area. A Memorandum of Understanding for TBNRM is in preparation and a joint coordination unit has been established. Transboundary cooperation occurs between government agencies, namely the National Environmental Secretariat and the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service, as well as between governments and communities (on public, private, and communal lands).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Private-sector and NGO involvement in TBNRM activities should be consistent with the fair and equitable participation of local communities, and should support the development of a national and international climate conducive to investment.
2. TBNRM areas should be chosen carefully to ensure that projected benefits are greater than the costs. Failure to do so could lessen "good will" and weaken momentum for other projects.
3. Rather than seeking to initiate new transboundary projects, donors and external agencies should address critical needs through projects and actions currently under way.

Principal existing and potential TBNRM areas in southern Africa



Memorandums of Understanding

Within much of southern Africa, effective management of natural resources requires at least some degree of management across boundaries. The level of formality for TBNRM arrangements varies. Informal cooperation may occur at local levels: for example, with complementary fire control regimes, tracking of illegal hunters, and management of certain key species. These relationships may continue for years; however, they are extremely sensitive to personnel changes and shifts in overarching policy. Other situations may require a greater degree of formality to catalyse change. In most cases, a Memorandum of Understanding is required to obtain the full range of ecological, socioeconomic, political, and cultural benefits.

J. Oglethorpe

4. General guidelines can be outlined for TBNRM development, but it must be recognised that conditions of each area are unique; a blueprint for all TBNRM areas is not possible.
5. Donors and external agents should be careful not to become drivers of the TBNRM process, but should focus instead on "levelling the playing field" by building the capacity of less developed partners.

TBNRM improves regional ecological management, increases economic opportunities, decreases cultural isolation, fosters peace, and provides a basis for further collaboration in other, more politically charged areas. Continued TBNRM progress relies on maintaining open communication among existing efforts—sharing successes, lessons learned, and best practices among stakeholders, donors, and practitioners. It is this dialogue that will shape the foundation of future efforts in TBNRM.

The objective of this study was to conduct an assessment and preliminary analysis of issues, approaches, and targets of opportunity related to the management of transboundary natural resource management areas in southern Africa for USAID's Regional Center for Southern Africa (RCSA). The Biodiversity Support Program (BSP), a USAID-funded consortium of World Wildlife Fund (WWF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and World Resources Institute (WRI), managed the study for RCSA. The study was implemented by a team of consultants, consisting of:

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Mary Rowen	USAID Liaison, Technical Advisor and Editor (USAID)
Judy Oglethorpe	Study Manager and Technical Advisor (BSP)

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Other Reports from the Study on the Development of Transboundary Natural Resource Management Areas in Southern Africa:

- 1) Main Report 2) Environmental Context 3) Community Perspectives 4) Global Review

Hard copies of these reports are available free of charge from BSP, and electronic versions are available on the internet (<http://www.BSPonline.org>). A list of other BSP publications can be obtained from BSPonline.org, by email or by post.

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